

Appendix XVIII

Sample Curriculum

- 1) MATRIX, A Parent Network and Resource Center, Parent Professional Partnership Project



Matrix

A Parent Network and Resource Center

555 Northgate Drive, Suite A, San Rafael, CA 94903
415-499-3877 800-578-2592 Fax 415-507-9457

PARENT PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

ABSTRACT

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Projects, the Parent Professional Partnership Project is structured to promote the following beliefs:

- Students with disabilities benefit from being educated in their neighborhood schools with nondisabled peers who will also gain from the integration experience.
- Educational decisions for students with disabilities must respect and include family values and beliefs.
- Collaboration between families and education professionals will result in a more meaningful experience for all students, leading to richer participation in the school community and the larger society.

As a Parent Network and Resource Center, the Matrix Partnership Project articulates the parent perspective and fosters collaborative linkages between families and professionals within the national movement towards inclusive education. The Partnership Project is a federally funded, five year pilot study with three components: preservice, inservice, and technical assistance.

PRESERVICE

Representing a significant departure from traditional teacher training models, the preservice component involves parents as co-teachers at the university level. In collaboration with education professionals, parents design and implement curricula and teaching materials, integrating the cumulative knowledge and expertise of families into the teaching process. This is currently being implemented at Sonoma State University. Rigorous academic research methods will evaluate the effectiveness of this dynamic model to assess whether or not parents are instrumental in effecting positive changes in teacher attitudes and skills.

INSERVICE / TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Parent/professional teams develop and provide training and support for students, teachers, administrators, and other parents already confronting issues related to inclusive education. The Marin County Office of Education, Mill Valley School District, San Rafael School District, and Novato Unified School District, as participants in the pilot study, are field testing materials and methods. The objective is to provide a model of

THE PARENT PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

For INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Highlights

The Project's Preservice training in Education 430 at Sonoma State University (required for all teachers receiving a clear credential in the state of California) is well established and may well continue in some form beyond the life of the OSEP grant. At the present time plans are in the discussion phase to explore application for a possible additional grant or some other form of maintaining the collaborative model between parents and university faculty. The preservice component has also expanded to the University of California at Davis. At present Matrix staff have co-taught at Sonoma State University for approximately three years.

Formal evaluations of Project effectiveness revealed a consistent pattern of continuing social isolation of focus students receiving Project support. In response to the need for additional assistance with social integration and the building of friendships, the Project developed the Partners At Lunch (PAL) program for middle and high school students. The program brought together students with disabilities and non-disabled students during the lunch hour in a structured setting; designed to remove barriers and promote empathy and understanding, the PAL program utilized a variety of games and activities specifically developed to enhance social relations at school. By all accounts the Program was successful.

The fifth and final year of the grant is designated for dissemination of Project results and outcomes. Materials developed during the life of the Project (inclusion packet, bibliography, PAL manual, etc.) will be available by June, 1998. In addition, Project staff are presenting information about the Project at national conferences throughout the year (Tash in Seattle, Conference on Learning Disabilities in Albuquerque, California Department of Special Education statewide conference, etc.).